

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF FRED HAMPTON

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 4, 2020

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, you can kill the revolutionary, but you cannot kill the revolution. These were the words my late comrade and best friend Fred Hampton, the Chairman and co-founder of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party spoke and lived by. In a year that has seen too many Black lives unjustly taken, Chairman Fred's words, life, and legacy remain just as vital to our understanding of justice today as they were on the date of his assassination on December 4, 1969.

Chairman Fred was both a visionary and a revolutionary, who fought for a more just world for everyone. I had the distinct privilege of recruiting and working alongside Fred during our righteous struggle for the liberation and emancipation of the people who had been ignored by those in power for far too long. We encouraged community development and empowerment through programs that included community health clinics and an expansive free breakfast for children program, finally delivering critical social services to long underserved communities. We also helped broker a peace agreement between Chicago's street gangs, reducing violence in the city's most marginalized neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party joined forces with the Latino Young Lords organization, and the Young Patriots, an organization of poor whites living in Chicago's Uptown community. Together, we formed the original Rainbow Coalition to fight all economic oppression. This watershed organization assembled a working-class coalition to fight for our shared interests, despite the fact that we were working in one of the most segregated cities in the United States. We banded together to fight many of the issues that still plague us to this very day, including police brutality, substandard housing, mediocre education, and low-quality health care.

In the early hours of December 4th, 51 years ago, the Chicago Police Department with the cooperation, coordination, and support of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Cook County State's Attorney entered an apartment on West Monroe Street that seven members of the Black Panther Party were staying in, with the premeditated aim of murdering Fred Hampton. The police immediately opened fire, killing Fred as he lay in his bed alongside his pregnant girlfriend, Akua Njeri. Our fellow Black Panther Party Member Mark Clark was also killed in the raid. There but for the grace of God, on that dreadful night, go I. In fact, my apartment was raided during the early hours the very next morning, December 5, 1969.

Madam Speaker, through meticulous work we were able to prove that the official nar-

rative of that night, that Hampton and Clark were killed in a vicious firefight, was entirely a falsehood. The police and State's Attorney claimed that they engaged in a fierce battle with the Panthers, but investigators were able to determine that the police fired 99 bullets while the Panthers only fired one.

A civil lawsuit would further reveal that the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program, or COINTELPRO, helped plan the murder of Fred Hampton. William O'Neil, an FBI informant within the Party, provided floor plans of the apartment to the FBI, who provided them to the State's Attorney and Chicago Police Department. An autopsy found a massive dose of the barbiturate Seconal in Chairman Fred's bloodstream, powerful enough to sedate an elephant. J. Edgar Hoover's FBI viewed the Black Panther Party movement Fred and I helped start to liberate our brothers and sisters who were suffering from divestment, lack of health care, and police brutality—as the number one threat to the national security of America.

This country's government planned the assassination—the political assassination—of one of our nation's brightest young leaders. To my recollection, the murder of Fred Hampton is the only time federal law enforcement conspired to carry out the political assassination of an American citizen on United States soil, a truly shameful moment in the history of our country. This was a systemic campaign to violently disrupt a movement seeking justice and freedom for the most marginalized among us. This should remind all of us that Black lives have never been fully valued by many of those in this country's power structures. Too often, justice is not sought for the families of those whose lives are senselessly taken by the state.

Madam Speaker, when the South Side of Chicago's very own Ida B. Wells published her seminal investigative journalism on lynching in America, she found that many lynchings occurred because the victims posed a threat to the white supremacist status quo. One of her best friends was killed for merely operating a successful grocery store that competed with neighboring white businesses. While the killings Ida B. Wells examined were not political assassinations like the murder of Fred Hampton, they share a common thread. Both challenged the white supremacist status quo in their communities.

Fred Hampton profoundly challenged this status quo by fiercely advocating for economic and social dignity for all people, and by providing long overdue social services to the most neglected communities in Chicago. Fred Hampton's challenge to the status quo proposed nothing less than a demand for full civil rights and economic opportunity for all those whose talents, dreams, and goals had long been stifled. This was a scary proposition to those like State's Attorney Hanrahan and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who would stop at nothing to maintain the unjust status quo that prevailed in Chicago and throughout the United States in December of 1969. Fred

Hampton gave his life to help create a more fundamentally fair and equal nation for every American, consistent with our nation's founding principles.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, too often it appears that for Black Americans merely existing can be seen as a challenge to the white, racist power structure. And sadly, as Ida B. Wells found in 1892, the consequences can be just as gruesome. Ahmaud Arbery was 25 years old when he was gunned down for merely jogging in what his killers deemed to be the wrong neighborhood. Despite this incident taking place in February of this year, and a video being available, neither of the men now charged with the murder of Ahmaud Arbery were arrested until May. If not for a report by The New York Times that helped lead to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's intervention in the matter, Mr. Arbery's killers may never have faced justice.

Ahmaud Arbery's death was a lynching, which occurred because two white men felt uncomfortable with his jogging through their neighborhood. One of the most recent in far too long a line of lynch mob killings of Black people in the United States.

Madam Speaker, Congress must act promptly to ensure that no one who participates in such acts of terror and hatred can escape justice. As introduced, my bill, the Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act, would designate lynching as federal hate crime. This would apply whether or not those committing the offense were acting under the color of law. By designating lynching as a federal hate crime, the United States Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation would be compelled to investigate a case like Ahmaud Arbery's.

The Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act honors the legacy of Emmett Till, who was brutally murdered in Money, Mississippi, in 1955. His death helped spark this country's civil rights movement, but his murderers never faced justice, as they were acquitted at a sham trial in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. Passing the Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act would ensure that the full force of the United States Federal Government is always brought to prosecute those who commit the monstrous act of lynching.

We have the opportunity to finally, after 120 years and 200 attempts since Congressman George Henry White of North Carolina introduced the first anti-lynching legislation, make lynching a federal crime. In fact, Ida B. Wells herself advocated for the administration of President William McKinley to push for anti-lynching reforms all the way back in 1898. Passage of the Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act into law would demonstrate that this country understands the heinous legacy of lynching and begin the process of finally closing this shameful chapter of our history.

Madam Speaker, let us never forget the courage, conviction, and compassion of Fred Hampton. Despite this government assassinating him at only 21 years of age, Chairman Fred's work and legacy are everlasting. Let

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our work in Congress be guided by his legacy of pursuing freedom and justice for all people. That work can begin by sending the Emmet Till Anti-lynching Act to the President's desk, an act that would require action by our colleagues in the Senate. That would be a clear demonstration that Congress has begun to value the Black lives, including Fred Hampton's, Emmett Till's, Ahmaud Arbery's, and the countless others whose lives have been systematically devalued for far too long.

HONORING STATE SENATOR TOM CASPERSON

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 4, 2020

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, yesterday, my colleagues, Representatives JACK BERGMAN and TOM TIFFANY, paid tribute on the House floor to former state senator and servant leader for Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Mr. Tom Casperson. Today, I rise to do the same. On November 29, Tom lost his battle with cancer, but throughout his life, he embodied many of the traits that our great state—and particularly our Upper Peninsula—is known for: hard work, fierce independence, and an undying devotion to the people of his community.

Born in Escanaba, Tom worked for his family's log trucking business for more than three decades, rising through the ranks from trucker to owner. He could have continued at the helm of his family's successful company. However, after a fatal accident involving a log-truck-industry colleague took the life of a young woman and her baby, Tom resolved to help implement safety measures for the industry so the tragedy would never repeat itself. When he realized that his best chance at making a difference was through the political process, he decided to run for office.

In 2002, Tom was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. Just eight months after being sworn in, Tom made good on his first legislative priority when he passed legislation to require new safety measures in the log-trucking industry. This first public act he authored was followed by an incredible 117 additional bills passed into law during the 14 years that Tom served the Upper Peninsula—six years as the State Representative and eight years as State Senator.

Tom was a tenacious advocate for the Upper Peninsula and, in the days since his passing, tributes to his life have poured in from public officials on both sides of the aisle and across Michigan. On Wednesday, Governor Whitmer lowered our state's flags on the day of his funeral in his honor. In so many statements remembering his life, what shines through is his passion for doing the people's work and setting an example for future generations of public servants.

Tom's passing is felt particularly by my team because his son-in-law, Chan, is a Wounded Warrior Fellow in my office. Chan and his wife, Ashley, have shared with us what a wonderful and loving grandfather Tom was to their three children, especially how meaningful it was when Tom traveled the world to visit his grandchildren while Chan was stationed abroad with the U.S. Navy. I know that they will deeply miss their lengthy and substantive

political conversations that were always civil and informative.

At a time when consensus seems elusive, Tom was an example of what we can accomplish when we work together and find common ground. Today, I'm thinking of Tom's wife, Diane, of Chan and Ashley, Ashley's three siblings, and Tom's grandchildren. I hope it serves as a comfort for them to know that he left a profound mark on those who knew him, loved him, and served with him.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF WALTER K. ROBINSON, SR.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 4, 2020

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in remembering the life and legacy of Walter K. Robinson, Sr., a District of Columbia resident for over 50 years and a Documented Original Tuskegee Airman. Mr. Robinson died on November 23, 2020, his 100th birthday. Mr. Robinson will be remembered by his family, friends and the East Coast Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, of which he was an active member.

In 1941, while attending Howard University, Mr. Robinson volunteered for the Army Air Corps. He was sent to Camp Lee in Virginia, Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi and finally to Tuskegee Army Air Base in Tuskegee, Alabama. He began training at Tuskegee Institute for Basic Ground School and, after three months, continued in Pre-Flight, Primary, Basic and Advanced Flight. During Primary Training, he had an accident, severing his Achilles tendon, and was hospitalized for almost a year, enduring six operations and extensive physical therapy. Yet, Mr. Robinson completed Primary, Lower, and Upper Basic Training, and while he was in Lower Advanced, World War II ended. After his honorable discharge from the military, Mr. Robinson and his wife, Edmonia, moved to D.C. in 1959. He soon joined the Postal Service and rose through the ranks to become the second Black Manager of Delivery and Collection for the District.

I had the immense honor of hosting Mr. Robinson at my office in 2017, where I presented him with a bronze replica of the Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal. Mr. Robinson is emblematic of the many D.C. residents who have heroically sacrificed so much for their country, even without their full citizenship rights. I am proud to have been able to honor his service.

Tuskegee Airmen like Mr. Robinson did more than protect America from foreign enemies during World War II; they saved America from itself, defying the gross misconception that African Americans were not capable of flying and fighting as equal servicemembers. The accomplishments of these brave servicemembers helped pave the way for President Harry Truman's decision to integrate the military in 1948. Their service to this country and as history-shapers was recognized in 2007 when 300 members of the Tuskegee Airmen, including Mr. Robinson, received the Congressional Gold Medal.

I ask the House of Representatives to join me in remembering the life and legacy of Walter K. Miller, Sr.

IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN (RETIRED) WILLIAM EISENHART

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 4, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain (Retired) William Eisenhart of Altoona, Pennsylvania, who courageously served our nation in the U.S. Army.

During his fifteen-year military career, Captain Eisenhart served with distinction. While he was stationed in Vietnam from November 1967 to October 1968, Captain Eisenhart served as a Senior Advisor to forces in Tan Thanh Dong Province. In this role, he moved his advisory team into a dilapidated fortress located on strategic territory. Captain Eisenhart and his team are credited with making several critical improvements to the fortress that helped the United States forces, including the installation of a helipad that allowed the Army to facilitate medical evacuations in Thanh Dong Province. Holding this outpost was a challenge. On June 6, 1968, Captain Eisenhart was instrumental in repelling a superior enemy force when he fired a machine gun into the center of the enemy's line of attack, which allowed U.S. forces to effectively build up a defensive operation.

The fortress that Captain Eisenhart defended was a critical outpost in the Phu Hoa District for deterring enemy movement. For this extraordinary accomplishment, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with a "V" device and one Oak Leaf Cluster. In recognition of his service, Captain Eisenhart also was awarded the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with One Silver Service Star, and a Meritorious Unit Commendation with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster.

With his incredible legacy of selfless service, Captain (Retired) William Eisenhart exemplifies our American values. He is an outstanding American and Pennsylvanian, and it is my privilege to recognize his many achievements. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank Captain (Retired) Eisenhart for his dedication to our nation, our Commonwealth, and our community.

BIG CAT PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Mr. ESTES. Madam Speaker, the House is set to vote on the Big Cat Public Safety Act. Sadly, my Democratic colleagues are pushing legislation inspired by a reality show feud instead of focusing on the harsh realities that real life families are facing because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Madam Speaker, this bill does more harm than good for the very animals it seeks to protect. My district is home to Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, Kansas. It's owner, Jim Fouts, founded this park in 2008 to conserve endangered tiger species and educate visitors through interactive experiences.

Through its current operation, Tanganyika Wildlife Park has become one of the top big